



HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL EVENT FOR THE MEDIA

The following guidelines on how to set up and run successful facilities for the Media at your event have been issued by the Yachting Journalists Association and are endorsed by ISAF.

Event Website

The event website is the first place the media will usually look to find out about your event. Spend time on making your event website appealing, informative and welcoming. As many media work on a freelance basis and/or have limited budgets, you need to ensure your event is one they will want to cover, so make access easy.

As well as detailed event information such as the Notice of Race, provisional entry list and course diagrams, it is worth setting up a specific media button on the homepage linking to a dedicated area where media can register for news, information and attendance.

The media section should include this basic information:

- Accreditation process and ticketing for on shore events
- Facilities available on and off shore, (media centre opening hours, press boats etc)
- Programme of activity, sailing and social
- Travel and accommodation contacts
- Photography available (online gallery and rights info)
- TV availability and rights information
- Named media liaison with full contact details
- Map of the venue indicating the press centre/refreshments/transport links/press boats

Online Registration should commence long before the event to give you time to assess and plan for press requirements and build a press database to send out preliminary news stories and features. The more organized and media friendly your event, the better the support and coverage you will receive. Additional information that you should include in your press packs and online is detailed below:

Press Accreditation

- Full accreditation is absolute priority so that the working press can carry out their functions without interruption
- PR and sponsor's representatives should not be allowed access to the same working area as the press, except at specific times and by invitation.
- Proof of authenticity required. Advance accreditation is recommended so that unknown applications can be vetted. Accreditation at the event should be backed with unimpeachable credentials such as a YJA Press Card, or at the very least, a letter from a commissioning editor.
- YJA members are issued with official Photo ID press that can be readily checked on the YJA web site www.yja.co.uk and from where a passport sized photograph can be downloaded as a secondary identity reference.
- Passes should allow open access to all areas other than those used for private hospitality and any specific private athlete areas.

The Press Office

- This should be staffed by experienced, knowledgeable professionals.
- Only accredited press to have access to the working press areas. This should be off limits to competitors, PR personnel and sponsor representatives unless invited.
- Entrance should be screened for accredited media professionals only.
- Put up central message boards or post boxes for messages to press.
- Email facilities/wifi for accredited press only.
- Create a dedicated press conference/briefing area with a microphone.
- Sufficient desk space with power points preferably at desk level for ease of use.
- Additional power points for re-charging equipment
- Fax facility – incoming and outgoing.
- Photocopier and paper supply
- Secure storage for equipment (lockers or a security desk).
- Quiet room for radio interviews.
- Photographers' room with broadband connections for photo transmission.
- Engineers should be on hand throughout the event to fix any press office equipment.
- Water cooler/drinks/vending machines or easy access and directions to facilities

Press Information

Press packs containing the following information should be available for all accredited press on arrival. Ideally the initial programme of events, provisional entry list, notice of race and sailing instructions should be available on your website and sent digitally to pre-accredited press.

- Event programme.
- Timetable of events.
- Notice of race and sailing instructions.
- Course charts.
- Entry lists should include boat names, numbers, owner's and skipper's first and family names, nationality, home town, past successes, any other relevant information.
- Event/sponsor's logo artwork.
- Full event background information including details of past winners.
- List of relevant contacts, names, telephone/fax numbers and email addresses.

Information during the Event

The flow of information during your event is vital for accurate reporting. The media will need to have the following detail as soon as it is available. Therefore, you need to work out before your event who is responsible for communication with the press office from the Race Office and on the water and how information will be relayed to the media in the Press Office and as soon as possible online:

- Results
- Position reporting at marks for long races.
- Order of finish.
- Provisional results indicating protests and any other potential changes.
- Final results after jury decisions have been made.
- Where an event involves a series of races, then overall positions are required after each race.
- In trans-ocean races, position information is required four times daily.

Press Officers

Good press office staff can make all the difference to the media's experience and reporting at your event:

- Professional and experienced personnel used to the environment and the language of the sport.
- Their main role should be as information providers and facilitators for the working press.
- They should have instant priority access to organizers, event officers and sponsors.
- They should have instant access to all contact details of competitors, team managers etc.
- They should ensure that accreditation requirements are complied with.
- Their priority is to ensure that press requirements are given top level importance within the event procedures.
- In the event of serious incidents, immediate openness and assistance to the press in covering a story accurately is a better policy than trying to conceal detail that is bound to come to light at a later date.

Telephones and Communication

- Each desk or work space requires a broadband connection. If the press office has a wireless system, then this should be password protected to block outsiders from taking up vital bandwidth. An IT technician should also be available during the initial stages of an event, to resolve any connection problems.
- It is vital to have sufficient bandwidth to accommodate the number of press expected at any one time.
- There should be sufficient telephone lines for all daily news journalists to meet their deadlines.
- All journalists should be able to use telephone lines to receive calls from their offices and to be able to dial freephone numbers for copy taking and transmission.
- If pay phones are installed, there should be an easy, accessible payment system.
- Pay phones should be of the card type and a supply of cards must be readily available. Payment systems should be as flexible as possible. Payphones should be capable of handling modem calls with suitable sockets and without disruptive tones.
- ISDN lines for radio interviews. Radio reporters require ISDN for live broadcasting and recorded playouts.
- Though not strictly part of the press facilities, it is essential that suitable telecommunications facilities are made available for competitors. Facilities for fax, telephone and internet connections should be provided in a separate location, to allow competitors to send and receive messages without disturbing the working press.

Timing and Deadlines

- Newspaper and Radio/TV news deadlines are vitally important and immovable.
- We recommend asking journalists for their deadline requirements during the accreditation process and giving them priority at these times.
- Ensure that results and latest information are provided ahead of deadline times.
- Issue provisional results immediately. If necessary, these can be copies of hand written finish-lists to meet first edition deadlines. Amendments, protest results, etc, can be added as they become available.
- Schedule press conferences with deadlines in mind.
- Press conferences should be timed as soon after the finish of an event as possible, but bear in mind the need for progress reports during events as well as press deadlines and requirements in other parts of the world where the story may also be covered. For round

- the world races and events like the America's Cup, it is essential to issue at least two progress reports a day to accommodate deadlines in the northern and southern hemispheres.
- Magazine journalists have deadline requirements too. Most magazine deadlines are well in advance of publication dates, but an event may be timed close to a printing deadline.

Press Boats

- Fast enough to keep up with the boats involved.
- Dry (low spray) when at speed.
- TV boats should be as stable as possible.
- RIBs or bigger boats depending on the event and the press requirements.
- Separate boats for TV and stills photographers.
- Experienced, properly briefed drivers.
- Strict allocation to accredited press only.
- Press with own boats to be accredited to the press boat fleet with appropriate identification. Wherever possible, flags should not be used to identify TV and photo boats as they can obstruct filming.

Photographers

- A separate area should be provided for photographers with room for light boxes, computers and other equipment.
- Secure storage for equipment.
- Sufficient bandwidth to match the number of photographers expected.
- Power points for charging batteries and powering equipment.
- Reserved front row positions at press conferences with unrestricted view.

Radio

- ISDN and telephone lines.
- Secure storage for equipment.
- Quiet room for interviews with appropriate acoustics; separate work room.
- Power points for charging batteries and powering equipment.
- Audio feed into central PA system at press conferences.

Television

The following items are an overview of the basic requirements for TV; full details should be discussed with your production company.

- Work room separate from journalists with space for editing equipment.
- Power points for charging batteries and powering equipment.
- Secure crew room with storage space for equipment.
- Broadband and telephone lines.
- Suitable positions and power points at press conferences with audio feed into central PA system.

For more information about the Yachting Journalists Association visit the website at www.yja.co.uk